WASHINGTON CITY.

FRIDAY, January 30, 1801.

The Preſident has nominated ROGER GRISWOLD Secretary of War.

We have guardedly abſtained from any remarks on the unfortunate diſaſter which has lately conſiderably injured, & ſtill more extenſively hazarded, the papers of the Treaſury. A ſubject, ſo important in its conſequences, ſeemed to require a circumſpect and cautious treatment. It was eaſy to foreſee that ſuſpicion would attach itſelf ſome where; but it was not eaſy to decide at once the truth of ſuch ſuſpicion.

Ten days have elapſed ſince the fire, and the public are now as much at a loſs, as far as regards any official information, to aſcertain the extent of the injury, as they were at the time of its occurrence.

The dignity of the government would not have been committed by an official ſtatement, and had it been deemed improper to give the information directly to the people, it might, without embarraſsment, have been communicated to their repreſentatives—Such an act immediately ſubſequent to the injury, would have marked the ſolicitude of the executive on the ſubject, and would have gone farther to remove exiſting ſuſpicions, than any other meaſure which could have been purſued.

To a delicate mind, it would appear to be an object in the higheſt degree deſirable, to exhibit the preciſe extent of the injury done to the treaſury department, that no ground might in future exiſt to queſtion the fidelity of the executive officers.

In addition to this ſtep, duty would have ſuggeſted another.

Circumſtances, ſufficiently ſtrong to juſtify the ſuſpicion of deſign, exiſted. The truth or untruth of ſuch ſuſpicion would have been moſt clearly determined by offering by way of proclamation a eward for any proof of deſign. Had proof been exhibited, a conviction of the criminal would have enſued: and had none been offered, the integrity of the department would have been vindicated.

Theſe remarks flow from a deſire that the reputation of the government ſhould, particularly in money matters, be immaculate; and not from any wiſh to criminate its agents.

It is not yet too late to purſue the meaſures recommended.

MESSAGE.

Gentlemen of the Senate, and Gentlemen of the House of Reresentatives.

I now tranſmit to both Houſes of Congreſs, in conformity to law, my annual account of the application of grants for the contingent charges of government for the year one thouſand eight hundred.

JOHN ADAMS.

UNITED STATES, Jan. 16, 1801.

1800.	*Dolls.*
JAN. 21—To warrant No. 397, in favor of William Smith Shaw, for his expences on a miſſion from Philadelphia to Mount Vernon, on public buſineſs,	50
DEC. 31—To balance unexpended on this day, and ſubject to the orders of the Preſident of the United States,	19,950
	20,000
1799.	*Dolls.*
DEC. 31—By grant of twenty thouſand dollars made by "An act making appropriations for the ſupport of government, for the year 1799," paſſed on the 2d March 1799, and which remained ſubject to the orders of the Preſident of the United States, at the cloſe of that year, according to a ſtatement rendered under date of January 17, 1800,	20,000

Treaſury department, Register's Office, Jan. 14, 1801.

JOSEPH NOURSE, REGISTER.

The above meſſage is publiſhed from a ſenſe of juſtice to the Preſident of the U. States. It cannot be doubted that, if diſpoſed laviſhly to expend the national treaſure, a more convenient occaſion could not have been ſeized than that offered by the contingent fund. By it 20,000 dollars were ſubjected to his orders. Of this ſum he has uſed only 50 Dollars. The Firſt Magiſtrate of a Republic, if ever entitled to the thanks of the people for diſcharging his duty, is on no occaſion, perhaps, more entitled to their thanks, than for a rigid devotion of public monies to national purpoſes.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WEDNESDAY, January 28, 1801.

Mr. OTIS, from the committee appointed for that purpoſe, made report on the ſituation of the Treaſury department, on the 1ſt day of January, when Oliver Wolcott reſigned.

Ordered to lie on the table, and to be printed.

Mr. HARPER reported a bill amending the bankrupt act.

Referred to a committee of the whole on Friday.

The Houſe went into a committee of the whole on the bill for giving a right of pre-emption to JOHN C. SYMMES and his aſſociates, for lands lying between the Miami rivers.

After conſidering the ſame, the committee roſe without coming to a deciſion, and aſked leave to ſit again.

Information was received from Senate that they had paſſed the act for the relief of Solomon Boſton, and the act for erecting a light houſe on Cape Pog.

THURSDAY, Jan. 29.

A reſolution in the following words, propoſed by Mr. Harper was read, and ordered to lie on the table.

Reſolved that the act, entitled an act to augment the ſalaries of certain officers therein mentioned ought to be continued in force.

A Petition from ſundry Merchants of Rhode Iſland was preſented to the Houſe and on motion, referred to the committee of Commerce and Manufactures.

The following reſolution propoſed by Mr. Rutledge, was preſented to the Houſe, which being read was ordered to lie on the table.

Reſolved that a committee be appointed to prepare and report ſuch rules as in their opinion are proper to be adopted by this Houſe, to be obſerved in the election of a Preſident of the U. S. whoſe term is to commence on the fourth day of March next, provided the electors appointed under the Authority of the States, have not elected a Preſident for that term.

The Houſe reſolved itſelf into a Committee of the whole Houſe on the Bill to incorporate the perſons therein named, and their aſſociates, as a mine and metal Company.

A motion was made to ſtrike out the firſt ſection of the Bill, on the principle that Congreſs was not authoriſed by the Conſtitution of the United States, to grant Charters of Incorporation. This Motion was ſupported by Meſſrs. Livingſton and Bird, and oppoſed by Meſſrs. S. Smith, Rutledge, J. Brown and Bayard. On the Queſtion being taken it was determined in the negative.

Sundry amendments were made, which were reported by the Committee, taken up and adopted by the Houſe, and the Bill ordered to be engroſſed and read a third time to-morrow.

During the ſeſſion of this day, while the Houſe was in a committee of the whole, a noiſe was made by a perſon in the gallery, expreſſing in a very loud voice his approbation of what had been juſt ſaid by one of the Members. By the Direction of the Chairman of the Committee of the whole, the Gallery was cleared, and the perſon who had committed the offence was taken into cuſtody by the Serjeant at arms. Before the houſe adjourned a motion was made and carried that the Perſon ſhould be diſcharged from the confinement.

WEDNESDAY, January 21.

SEDITION LAW.

Houſe in committee Mr. Morris in the chair.

The reſolution reported by the committee was, that it would be expedient to renew the law in addition to the act for the puniſhment of certain crimes againſt the United States.

Mr. Platt, chairman of the committee, explained the reaſons of the committee for propoſing a reſolution for its continuation. The only arguments that could be adduced againſt it were, as to the conſtitutionality and as to the expediency of the meaſure. That it was conſtitutional, he contended could be well and plainly proved without entering into the queſtion upon the grounds and proofs exhibited at the period of the original paſſage of the bill, from the deciſion in its favour, after a lengthy examination in both houſes of congreſs, and its adoption into a law. Added to this was the ſolemn deciſion and concurrence of the judiciary.

After theſe deliberate deciſions in favor of it, to doubt the conſtitutionality of this law, would be abſurd. To thoſe who took every occaſion to ſhew their oppoſition to the government, and were accuſtomed to vilify the conduct of its warmeſt adherents. This law muſt be obnoxious, but thoſe who conſidered the government a bleſſing and worthy the protection of a free people, muſt approve of the proviſions of this law, as one of the moſt valuable inſtitutions in its ſupport.

As to the expediency of the meaſure the committee thought it was a wholeſome and ameliorating interpreter of the common law, eſtabliſhed to aſſiſt the government upon the moſt fair and equitable principle. On the one hand, the right of the government in ſupport of itſelf, is eſtabliſhed; on the other that right of protection is ſo eſtabliſhed, as not to injure in the leaſt, the honeſt and well intended individual, but to afford him the means of exculpating himſelf, although engaged in ſcrutinizing meaſures of the adminiſtration of the government; for unleſs it can be made evident to a court and jury that the thing written was done with a falſe and malicious intention, the precaution is uſeleſs. He ſaw nothing in this law, notwithſtanding all that had been ſaid about it, which an honeſt man ought to fear. No government in the world demanded the public confidence more than ours, when well adminiſtered; and ſhould a government be brought into popular diſrepute with impunity, through the falſe and malicious writings of thoſe who peaceably enjoy its bleſſings? He truſted not.

The houſe had been told on a former occaſion, that the ſun of federaliſm was about to ſet: he confeſſed that he viewed with horror the awful night that would follow. But notwithſtanding that, whilſt he poſſeſſed a ſeat in that houſe, he thought himſelf bound to legiſlate in favour of meaſures, to ſupport the government which the people had honoured by their choice. This reverſe of things ſhould never drive him from meaſures which it became his duty upon the moſt ſolemn conviction to adopt, ſince no injury could reſult but to thoſe whoſe wilful and habitual ſlander oppoſed it by falſehood. For his part he was not afraid of the new order of things; he had nothing to fear from the exiſtence of this law.

To thoſe who believed the rules of common law of force and effect in the United States, this law muſt be truly gratifying. By the common law two practices were eſtabliſhed, which this law moſt effectually removed by its ameliorating proviſions. Firſt, the common law rejected the evidence of truth in caſes of libels. Secondly, the court had an unlimited authority to aſcertain the penalty. By this law the truth muſt be given in evidence, and the penalty is aſcertained. He truſted that whilſt the liberty of ſpeech and of the preſs (privileges to be prized above all others) were made ſecure, the houſe would ſee the propriety of preventing the unlimited abuſe of this bleſſing, ſo injurious to the preſervation of ſocial order; an abuſe which was to be judged as to its extent by an impartial jury—a privilege by which are ſecured to every individual, and to the government equal rights.

Mr. DAVIS ſaid the gentleman from New-York and himſelf had as different feelings as to the manner of deciding the conſtitutionality of the law, as they had of its utility. Had the deciſions of the courts been made with all the moderation and ſolemnity that uſually attend judicial deciſions, he might anſwer that there had been proceedings in the courts of the U. States, calculated to eſtabliſh the conſtitutionality of that law, ſo far as the opinions of the judges went. For he muſt acknowledge that the judges had the power of deciding the conſtitutionality of a law under which they were to act, but he denied that thoſe deliberate deciſions had been made under it, that ought to eſtabliſh it as a conſtitutional law with the judges generally. Even in Great Britain, where we are too apt to look for examples he believed ſuch haſty adjudications could not be found. He was acquainted with Engliſh books, and could not then recollect any caſe where the accuſed had been ſummoned, indited before the grand jury, and tried by the venire or petit-jury, in the ſpace of a few hours or one day at moſt, more eſpecially where the accuſed had made affidavit, that he had material witneſſes abſent, as had been the caſe in two trials under this ſedition law, one at Philadelphia, the other in Richmond Virginia. If thoſe were deciſions that had rivetted the conſtitutionality of the law in the mind of the gentleman from New-York, he had taken ſlippery ground, from which he could be eaſily driven. But a judge of the United States having determined the law to be conſtitutional, did not bring conviction on his mind. He ſtill entertained the ſame opinion he had formerly entertained and he believed it would be difficult to perſuade the American people that the law was either conſtitutional or expedient. The gentleman from New-York ſays there is nothing in the law an honeſt man ſhould object to. Why then do honeſt men take ſhelter behind it? We are all fond of having our good deeds made public, and of concealing our bad ones. Now let the public judge who are the honeſt men; that gentleman and his political aſſociates, or myſelf and thoſe who uſually vote with me. We are willing to ſubmit our actions to public ſcrutiny and to riſe or fall by public opinion. If that gentleman and his friends intend to act honeſtly, why do they wiſh this law to hide their actions? Why lay the hands of power on the lips of the people, who ought to have the right of examining their political conduct and approving or condemning it? While they boaſt of honeſty, why ſkulk in darkneſs and ſhelter behind a ſedition law? In my opinion this neither argues honeſty, nor is ominous of good; at all events this is the true difference between the parties in this houſe. That gentleman and his friends form a party who wiſh to conceal their public conduct from the prying eyes of the public, and who ſay if you ſee you ſhall not ſpeak: myſelf and my political aſſociates, are willing to ſpread our actions before the tribunal of the people and to be judged by them. Now let the world judge who are the honeſt men, we, who expoſe our actions to public view, and ſay to them, judge and approve, or condemn us for our deeds; or thoſe who ſay be ſilent; we are above you; if you open your lips the penalty of the law ſhall be inflicted on you.

We are told by the gentleman from New-York, there is to be a new order of things. I believe there will be. It looks as if we ſhould burn all the old and begin a new.

What are gentlemen not contented with the ſedition law to protect them, do they want a wall of fire around them?

This law has been in force two years and what has been its effects? A few printers, and a few miſerable newſpaper ſcribblers have fallen victims to it, and it has diſguſted a large portion of the American people who have loaded your table with petitions praying for the repeal of the obnoxious law, and why will you again agitate the public mind by reviving a law ſo foreign to their feelings and hateful to their ſights? Will gentlemen never yield their party views to the public voice, and drop a law that has produced ſo much diſcontent.

If this law had been good and conſtitutional and but a few people had been diſſatisfied with it, there would be ſome excuſe for continuing it: but the very reverſe is the fact. I am not afraid of the law, I am not afraid I ſhall ever be ſubject to its operation, for in my opinion the adminiſtration, when it is preſented in the faireſt forms of truth, will afford ſufficient ground for all my animadverſions. I can turn to pages, and lay my finger on paragraphs which will authoriſe me to ſay more than I wiſh to ſay.

The gentleman from New-York ſays, they have been told, the ſun of Federaliſm would ſhortly ſet. I on a former occaſion did ſay ſo, and I again repeat it; this very law, if it has ever done any good, was in this way. I believe it has haſtened the declenſion of the federal ſun inſtead of controlling public opinion as it was intended. The oppoſite effect has been produced; men have acted up to their opinions, though they were forbid to ſpeak. Your own weapons have been turned againſt you, you find the public mind acting ſtrongly againſt you, though it dare not ſpeak.

The gentleman from New-York ſays that thoſe who conſider government an evil will vote againſt this law. I conſider good government a bleſſing, and am therefore